

WILLIAM ROSS SHOWER HOUSE
3068 Westminster Street
Manchester
Carroll County
Maryland

HABS No. MD-1054

HABS
MD
7-MANCH,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WILLIAM ROSS SHOWER HOUSE

HABS No. MD-1054

- Location:** 3068 Westminster Street, Manchester, Carroll County, Maryland
USGS Manchester, Maryland Quadrangle
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.338198.4391604
- Significance:** The William Ross Shower House is a 1920s example of Piedmont Maryland regional architecture of the L-shaped plan vernacular style house. The house also depicts the 20th century cultural traditions of the Showers, a family that was prominent throughout Manchester's history.
- Description:** The William Ross Shower House is a vernacular structure built in the 1920s on a lot on Westminster Street in Manchester. The historic setting of the property has changed considerably since the construction of the house, especially by the modern commercial development on the northeast. The house is two-story building with an L-shaped plan. The L-shaped plan was a popular feature in this region from the late 18th century through the early 20th century. The main block of the house is five bays by two bays and the ell is one bay by one bay. The main block has a gable roof and the ell has a shed roof that projects out from the rear of the gable roof. The exterior is covered in an asphalt siding. The roof is covered in asphalt shingles. The vernacular style of the structure is shown in the relative lack of ornamentation of both exterior and interior features.
- History:** In 1921, William H. Shower sold the easternmost portion of a lot that he owned on Westminster Street to his son, William Ross Shower. Both men were involved in a machine shop and automobile repair business that was located northeast of this lot on Westminster Street. William H. Shower died in 1924, and the probate records and excerpts from local newspapers indicate that William Ross Shower purchased the business. They do not indicate, however, whether William Ross Shower had already built a structure on the lot that he acquired in 1921. The oral tradition within the Shower family is that the house was built in the 1920s. The property remained in the Shower family until 1985. The original Shower to settle in this area was John Shower, a blacksmith, who emigrated from Germany to Philadelphia in 1750. In 1758, he established a farmstead approximately two miles north of present-day Manchester. His son, Colonel John Adam Shower, acquired the corner lots at the intersection of Westminster and North Main Streets in Manchester in 1809. Colonel Shower's son, Adam Shower, established the iron foundry on Westminster Street in 1852. The foundry business eventually passed into the hands of Adam's son, William H. Shower, and grandson, William Ross Shower, who operated the business as a machine and auto repair shop.
- Source:** "An Architectural and Historical Report on the William Ross Shower House," prepared for the Carroll County Bank and Trust Co., Inc., January 15, 1991.
- Historian:** Joseph M. Getty, Executive Director, Historical Society of Carroll County, September 25, 1991

**"An Architectural and Historical Report on the
William Ross Shower House
3068 Westminster Street, Manchester, Maryland"**

Prepared for the
Carroll County Bank and Trust Company, Inc.

by Joseph M. Getty, Executive Director
Historical Society of Carroll County

January 15, 1991

Photographs for this report are on file at the
Maryland Historical Trust
and consist of 35mm black and white
negative, prints, and color slides.

#7. Description

Summary

The William Ross Shower House is a vernacular structure built in the 1920s on a lot on Westminster Street in Manchester. The house is slightly set back from the street. The main facade faces southeast towards the street frontage of Westminster Street. The historic setting of the property has changed considerably since the buildings construction in the 1920s. To the northeast, the lot is bounded by modern commercial development. The house is two-story building that contains an L-shaped plan. The L-shaped plan was a popular feature in this region from the late 18th century through the early 20th century. The main block of the house is five bays by two bays and the ell is one bay by one bay. The main block has a gable roof and the ell has a shed roof that projects out from the rear of the gable roof. The exterior is covered in an asphalt siding. The roof is covered in asphalt shingles. The vernacular style of the structure is shown in the relative lack of ornamentation of both exterior and interior features.

Location and Setting

The William Ross Shower House is a vernacular structure built in the 1920s on a lot on Westminster Street in Manchester. The house is slightly set back from the street. The main facade faces southeast towards the street frontage of Westminster Street. In the early 20th century, this street was known as Foundry Avenue. The site has two medium-sized trees in the front yard and a concrete-paved driveway on the northeast side of the house. There is a small ornamental tree at the rear of the house and a hedge along the southwest property line. The northeast property line has a sharp change in elevation where a commercial parking lot and access road exists.

To the southwest are late 19th and early 20th century houses on individual lots. To the northeast, the lot is bounded by a driveway and parking lot to modern commercial development. A mid-1970s brick commercial building containing the Manchester Pharmacy is located on the lot to the northeast and brick U. S. Post Office built in 1985 is located on a lot to the north.

The historic setting of the property has changed considerably since the buildings construction in the 1920s. At that time, the lot to the northeast had an industrial use. During the mid-to-late 19th century, it was the location of the Manchester Foundry, operated by the Shower family. This business evolved during the early 20th century into a machine shop and then a automobile repair shop. About 1955, a concrete block automobile garage for repair work was built on the site by William Ross Shower. This structure was torn down for the construction of the Manchester Pharmacy in the mid-1970s.

The lot to the southwest is the property known as 3064 Westminster Street. The house on this property was constructed circa 1893 by William H. Shower, father of William Ross Shower. This house was extensively remodeled in 1925 by the Blocher family who purchased the property from Mrs. William H. Shower. Across the street from the property is a vernacular duplex built right up to the sidewalk. It is a late 19th century structure covered in shingles.

Exterior Design

The William Ross Shower House is a vernacular style frame structure that was built in the 1920s. It is two-story building that contains an L-shaped plan. The L-shaped plan was a popular feature in this region from the late 18th century through the early 20th century. The main block of the house is five bays by two bays and the ell is one bay by one bay. The main block has a gable roof and the ell has a shed roof that projects out from the rear of the gable roof. The exterior is covered in an asphalt siding. The roof is covered in asphalt shingles. There is an interior-end brick chimney on the northeast gable end and a stove flue exists at the ell wing on the southwest elevation. The structure is on a concrete block foundation.

The main facade is symmetrically arranged with a central entrance on the first floor. The other bays on the first and second stories have one-over-one sash windows. There is a full-length, one-story porch with a hipped roof covered in asphalt shingles. The ceiling of the porch is a thin tongue-and-groove board painted white. The porch roof is supported by square posts with molded ornamentation. The porch posts sit on a railing covered in shingles. The porch has a tongue-and-groove board wooden deck.

The central entrance contains a single door with a two-pane, horizontal transom above the door. The door has a single pane of window glass in the upper section and a single panel below. The door framing is a convex molding painted white. The exterior of the entrance has a single-pane wooden storm window over the transom and an aluminum storm door over the entrance. The window frames throughout the house have an exterior framing of a plain convex molding. The roofline has a plain boxed cornice that returns at the front gable ends.

The southwest gable end of the main block has two one-over-one windows on each floor. In the gable are two smaller one-over-one sash windows. This elevation shows the angle of the roof in projecting out to cover the ell wing. The southwest elevation of the ell has a single one-over-one sash window on each story.

The northeast gable end of the main block has two one-over-one windows on each floor. In the gable are two smaller one-over-one sash windows. The brick chimney with the upper two courses projecting out as a cap is located at this gable end. On the inner side of the ell was a double-tiered porch. The lower portion of the porch has been enclosed for use as a laundry room. The northwest elevation of the ell wing has a single one-over-one sash window centrally located on the first floor.

The double-tiered porch on the inner side of the ell wing was a typical feature for domestic structures in the region. In this design, the shed roof projects out from the ell to cover the area of the porches. The first story of the porch is enclosed and has a doorway and a six-over-six window on the northeast elevation and a single four-over-four window on the northwest elevation. The doorway has a cantilevered shed roof that forms a small entrance porch. The second story of the porch is still open. It has plain square porch posts and a railing with square balusters. The second floor northeast elevation has a door and a one-over-one sash window to the porch. The northwest elevation onto the second floor porch has a single one-over-one sash window.

Interior Design

The L-shaped plan provides for three rooms around a central stairhall. The stair hall has doors that lead into each of the three rooms. At the front of the stairhall are doors opposite one another leading into the parlor (on the northeast side) and the living room (on the southwest side). At the rear of the stairhall is a door leading into the kitchen in the ell wing.

The staircase has a plain design with a square newel post and square bannisters supporting a shaped handrail. The stair ends are plain and the walls below the staircase as well as throughout the hallway are plastered. The exterior door has a two-pane, horizontal transom and the door has a single pane of window glass in the upper section and a single panel below. The interior doors are four-paneled with tall vertical panels on the upper section of the doors. The doorframes in the hallway consist of plain pine boards without ornamentation joined at the corners with butt-end joints. The woodwork of the doorframes, doors, stair risers, railing and bannisters has a natural finish and some of the interior doors have original hardware.

The parlor is on the northeast side of the house and has two windows on the southeast wall, two windows on the northeast wall and a single window on the northwest wall. It has a stove flue on the northeast wall centrally located between the two one-over-one windows on the gable end. The walls are plastered and the wood trim on the windows is a natural finish similar to that found on the hallway doorframes. The floor have a modern carpeting.

The living room is on the southwest side of the house and has two windows on the southeast wall and two windows on the southwest wall. On the northwest wall is an entrance to the kitchen. There is no stove flue in this room. The walls are plastered and the wood trim on the windows is a natural finish similar to that found on the hallway doorframes. The floor have a modern carpeting.

The kitchen has single windows on the southwest and northwest walls. In the north corner of the room is a modern kitchen arrangement of cabinets and equipment. The southeast wall has a row of three doors leading to the hallway, basement, and living room. The northeast wall contains a door leading to the enclosed porch on the inner side of the ell. The walls have a modern wallpaper, the woodwork has been painted and the floor has a modern vinyl floorcovering.

The enclosed porch contains a laundry room. The entrance has a two-pane transom and single door with a single pane upper section and four-paneled lowered section. It has a mid-20th century sink and wooden cupboard. The walls are covered in a modern wallboard and painted.

On the second floor there is a central hallway with doors to four rooms on the second floor and to the second floor porch. This is an altered floor plan from the original which was changed to accomodate a modern bathroom. On the northwest side of the hall, the bathroom was added to the northeast section of the ell using an original door to what was originally a large bedroom. A partition wall was installed to creat the bathroom from the original bedroom and a new doorway was cut into the southwest portion of this room to make a smaller bedroom. In addition, a modern linen closet was built into the hallway on the southwest wall.

The northeastern bedroom has been remodeled with wall board on the walls and the woodwork painted. Two closets were built that project out into the room and flank the window on the northwest wall. It has two windows on the southeast wall, two windows on the northeast wall and a single window and door to the hallway on the northwest wall with the closets. On the southwest wall is an alcove formed by the entrance to the attic stairway which is enclosed. The floors are covered in a wall-to-wall carpet.

The southwest bedroom has two windows on the southeast wall and two windows on the southwest wall. On the northwest wall is the entrance to the hallway. The walls are wallboard and the wood trim has been painted. The floor have wall-to-wall carpeting.

The northwest bedroom has a single window on the southwest wall. The ceiling in this room angles down with the slope of the shed roof on the ell. On the southeast wall are modern built-in closets. The northeast wall is the modern partition that was inserted to create the bathroom. The walls are wallboard and the wood trim has been painted. The floor has wall-to-wall carpeting. The bathroom also has modern trim and bathroom fixtures.

The attic is unfinished and shows the construction technology for the roof framing system. The building has a common rafter roof. The rafters are mill-sawn two-by-tens with butt-end joints at the peaks. The shed roof of the ell wing has two-by-ten common rafters that are attached to and project out from the roofing system of the main block. The common rafters are covered with a horizontal board sheathing. The gable ends have two-by-four studs and are covered with a diagonal board sheathing. There is a plain enclosed stairway to the attic with plaster walls.

The basement has an open interior stair leading from the kitchen. It has a dirt floor and the interior wall is parged. The northeast, southeast and southwest wall each have two three-pane basement windows. The northwest wall has a crawl space under the ell. Centrally located between the two windows on the northeast wall is a cantilevered support for the brick stove flue located above. The basement is unfinished and the construction system for the first floor is visible. It consists of mill-sawn two-by-tens as floor joists supported by two major beams (made of three two-by-tens side-by-side) running through the house. This system has weakened and has been reinforced by steel posts. The basement windows are single horizontal sash of three panes each.

#8. Significance

Summary

In 1921, William H. Shower sold the easternmost portion of a lot that he owned on Westminster Street to his son, William Ross Shower. Both men were involved in a machine shop and automobile repair business that was located northeast of this lot on Westminster Street. William H. Shower died in 1924, and the probate records and excerpts from local newspapers indicate that William Ross Shower purchased part of the business location. They do not indicate, however, whether William Ross Shower had already built a structure on the lot that he acquired in 1921. The oral tradition within the Shower family is that the house was built in the 1920s. The property remained in the Shower family until 1985.

History

The property at 3068 Westminster Street in Manchester was part of the original tract of the land patent "New Market," that was granted to Richard Richards in 1765. Richards laid out Manchester and sold a majority of the lots in the 1790s. In 1809, the central portion of Manchester, known as the patent "German Church," was laid out in lots by the Trustees of Zion's Church. The Shower family purchased the lots in this location from both Richards and from the Trustees of Zion's Church.

The original Shower to settle in this area was John Shower, a blacksmith, who emigrated from Germany to Philadelphia in 1750. In 1758, he established a farmstead approximately two miles north of present-day Manchester. His son, Colonel John Adam Shower, acquired the corner lots at the intersection of Westminster and North Main Streets in Manchester in 1809. Colonel Shower's son, Adam Shower, established an iron foundry in 1852 on the property where the Manchester Pharmacy now stands, northeast of the lot where 3068 Westminster Street is located. The foundry business eventually passed into the hands of Adam's son, William H. Shower, and grandson, William Ross Shower, who operated the business as a machine and auto repair shop.

The lots where 3068 Westminster Street stands were owned by Adam Shower's brother, Dr. Jacob Shower. On the Manchester map in the *Illustrated Atlas of Carroll County, Maryland*, published in 1877 by Lake, Griffing and Stevenson, this property is unimproved.

The lot was purchased by William H. Shower from Dr. Jacob Shower's estate in 1893 (Carroll County Land Records, Liber 139, Folio 177). The lot sold for \$150 indicating that it was unimproved. The oral tradition in the Shower family is that William H. Shower built the house at 3064 Westminster Street in the mid-1890s. This house was sold from William H. Shower's estate in 1925 to the Blocher family. Newspaper excerpts from the April through May editions of the *American Sentinel* indicate that the Blocher family did extensive remodeling to the house before moving in.

In 1921, William H. Shower sold the easternmost portion of a lot that he owned on Westminster Street to his son, William Ross Shower. Both men were involved in a machine shop and automobile repair business that was located northeast of this lot on Westminster Street. William H. Shower died in 1924, and the probate records and excerpts from local newspapers indicate that William Ross Shower purchased part of the business location. They do not indicate, however, whether William Ross Shower had already built a structure on the lot that he acquired in 1921. The oral tradition within the Shower family is that the house was built in the 1920s. The property remained in the Shower family until 1985.

An excerpt from the *American Sentinel* of February 13, 1925, describes some of the transactions from the Shower estate:

"Mrs. William H. Shower sold her real estate on Foundry avenue at public sale on Saturday 7th. The home on Foundry avenue went to Ross Blocher at \$3,222.00. The Foundry building and lot was knocked down to David Yingling at \$300.00. The machine shop with engine tools, patterns, etc., was sold privately to Ross Shower, who now has a successful auto repair shop in part of the building, where he grew up practically among machinery and may possibly continue the two for success."

The Shower automobile repair business is documented by Harvey G. Schlichter in *Two Centuries of Grace and Growth in Manchester*:

"Mr. Ross Shower, son of William Shower who owned the Shower Foundry, was the first man in town to open an automobile repair shop, utilizing a building of his father's foundry for his shop. He continued this business, with the aid of his sons, until his death in 1960.

Land Records Research

Carr. Co.
Land Rec.

Date

Grantor - Grantee

1091/799 6/22/1988 Susan Carol Godlove & Samuel Barry Miller to
Wilfred C. Wright & A. P. Boone, Jr.

\$104,000; 2 lots; known as 3068 Westminster Street
identified as Lots 2 & 3 on unrecorded plat of M. T. Yeiser, surveyor; 2/6/1925;
Lot 2 - 7920 sq. ft.; Lot 3 - 5952 sq. ft.

923/889 10/31/1985 Viola Shower to
Susan Carol Godlove & Samuel Barry Miller

\$55,000; William Ross Shower having departed
(Lot 3 is vacant; deed reference 146/59; 2/27/1925; May R. Shower to William
Ross and Viola Shower. William H. Shower died with a will: Carroll County Will
Record 13/74. All real estate was devised to widow May R. Shower. Lot 3 was
sold at public auction for \$200. Next deed recorded is Lot 4 "Foundry Lot" to
David Yingling. Following deed recorded is part of "Foundry Lot" to William
Ross Shower)

Lot 2 is property with the house:

208/154 3/22/1951 F. Neal Parke, Attorney to
William Ross & Viola Shower

208/153 3/22/1951 William Ross & Viola Shower to
F. Neal Parke, Attorney

139/177 10/7/1921 William H. & May R. Shower to
William Ross Shower

139/177 9/30/1893 Sarah E. Shower, Mary F. Shower, Cordelia A. Shower to
William H. Shower

part of "New Market," 7/8 acre; \$150
(this would be Lots 2 & 3 above plus other land; in 54/31, 8/23/1880, William P.
Maulsby, attorney, grants to William H. Shower the "Foundry Lot.")

Estate of William H. Shower

Will: 13/74. Devises all real estate to wife, May R. Shower

Inventory of Personal Property: 26/152, 1/6/1925. Includes an inventory of the equipment in the
Manchester Foundry taken 12/23/1924.

Inventory of Leasehold Real Estate: 26/153, 1/6/1925. One lot of 13, 225 sq. ft. on Foundry
Avenue in Manchester. Value: \$1000. Deed reference: 54/31, 8/23/1880, William P.
Maulsby, et. al., Trustees, to William H. Shower.

Final Account: 27/519. Estate settled, 7/14/1925.